

City of West Des Moines Coyote Information

Dear Resident,

Coyote populations have dramatically increased throughout the United States in the past thirty years. Coyotes are thriving in the greater Des Moines area, and they are highly intelligent, typically secretive, and generally avoid human contact. Coyotes can play an important predator role in developed areas by reducing the population of geese and rodents. However, they may also prey on house pets, and while uncommon, aggressive coyotes may attack people. Wildlife experts agree that programs aimed at trapping and destroying coyote populations are not successful and the preferred alternative is public education.

To help prevent coyote encounters, residents are encouraged to do the following:

1. Do not leave small children or pets outside unattended.
2. Do not leave any pet food or human food in containers in your yard.
3. Do not attempt to feed, pet, or tame a coyote.
4. Keep your pets on a leash when you take them for a walk.
5. Store trash in tightly closed containers that cannot tip over.
6. Trim ground level shrubbery to reduce hiding places.
7. Pick up fallen fruit from trees and cover compost piles.
8. Install motion-sensitive lighting around your home which will scare the animals.

It is extremely important not to intentionally or unintentionally feed coyotes. Hazing coyotes is also effective in re-instilling fear of humans into coyotes. Hazing practices would include not backing away when you see a coyote, but rather yell, throw things, use noise devices, and pepper spray. Just because you see a coyote does not make that a problem coyote. For the most part they adjust extremely well to urban and suburban environments without exhibiting aggressive behavior toward humans. However, if you do witness a coyote that is aggressive on your property or neighborhood, please contact the West Des Moines Police Department at ??????